

## INTRODUCTION

A fundamental belief for Catholic schools is that in Jesus is seen God's image and likeness in its human expression, and that Jesus' values and teachings show all people 'the way, the truth and the life' (John 14:6). In accordance with this belief, values to be promoted within a Catholic school's understanding and practice of pastoral care include love, respect, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, repentance, reconciliation and justice.

Pastoral care of students is effected in many aspects of school life, and especially in a school's vision and mission statements, policies, procedures, programs, teaching and learning curriculum, student activities, student support and wellbeing services, behaviour management processes, family engagement, community partnerships, and school climate.

Lavalla Catholic College offers a coherent and professional pastoral care programme with a network of Learner Advisor teachers, co-ordinators, counsellors, advisers, programmes for students at risk, modified curriculum and pathways choices. Lavalla Catholic College also stands for certain moral positions. Simply emphasizing "consequences" can sometimes hide the reality that a particular act is simply wrong. The Catholic school must be prepared to promote moral values rather than focus simply on consequences.

## DEFINITION

Pastoral care of students in the context of this policy refers to action taken within a school by its leaders and community members to promote and enhance student wellbeing of a personal, social, physical, emotional, mental or spiritual nature. Key elements of student wellbeing are positive self-regard, respect for others, positive relationships, responsible behaviours and personal resilience.

## PRINCIPLES

1. Foundational to the nature of pastoral care in Catholic schools is the belief that each person is created in the image and likeness of God (*Genesis 1:27*), with the inherent dignity that this implies, and all are created as social beings, with the mutual rights, obligations and needs that this implies.
2. Pastoral care in Catholic schools affirms and gives expression to the belief that 'the person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.'
3. Schools exercise their pastoral responsibilities under the leadership of the Principal. Parents exercise their responsibility by providing positive support and collaborative engagement with the school in support of student and school community wellbeing.
4. Respectful and cooperative school-family relationships provide an effective channel of pastoral care for students. Schools and families share responsibility for developing and maintaining such relationships of trust, characterised by respect for the goodwill of the other and a willingness to engage collaboratively. Student wellbeing is best achieved within a school environment that is safe, supportive, inclusive and empowering, where diversity is respected and valued, where human rights and the common good are honoured, where relationships are positive, where students experience connectedness and engagement, and where those experiencing difficulty or special need receive particular care and support.

5. Enhanced student wellbeing contributes significantly to improved student learning outcomes. Effective pastoral care is therefore recognised as promoting the achievement of learning outcomes and thus contributing to a School Improvement Framework.
6. Effective whole-of-school approaches to pastoral care require age-appropriate behavioural education and skilling of students, and pastorally driven management of student behaviour through processes focused on both individual and community wellbeing, and on ensuring a just and reasonable balance of individual and community rights, needs and responsibilities.
7. Effective school-community partnerships offer opportunities for networks of pastoral care for students. Appropriate local services and agencies may be identified, and links or partnerships developed, to support the needs of students and their families and to enhance the school's own pastoral initiatives.

### ***Behavior Management Policies and Procedures***

Behavior management policies, school rules and sanctions are intended to promote the good order of the College community and, as such, are positive concepts. They can also be viewed as aids to fostering self-discipline and responsibility, wherein students progressively grow in their capacity to make good decisions.

There are reasonable, clear and fair behavior management guidelines and procedures and collaborative arrangements with parents and community services. There are various prevention and intervention strategies, which are based on restorative practice. The object of such policies and procedures is to maintain high standards of student behaviour and ensure fair treatment and the maintenance of the dignity of students and staff and the best interests of the school community.

### ***Students who are disruptive***

It is possible that there are some students whose personal and social problems manifest themselves in behaviours which are either disruptive to the teaching and learning program, disrespectful of school rules and codes of conduct, and/or harmful to the well-being and security of its members. The College will endeavour to assist these disruptive students to exercise more appropriate behaviour. When the behaviour and conduct of these students is unaffected by the care and discipline of the school, it is necessary to implement a formal process whereby the behaviour is named, warnings are provided and action is taken.

Some students may also be receiving assistance from other agencies outside the College. The College's procedures are to work with these students in the best interests of the student.

### ***Authority***

The Principal has the authority to suspend or expel students if they are deemed to have committed a serious offence. The principal follows appropriate procedures in this matter.

### ***Significant Factors which need to be balanced by the Principal***

There are increasing demands on principals to make decisions that balance issues including the young person's educational opportunities, the educational opportunities of students collectively, the concerns of the family and the duty of care. Also emerging is the issue of personal and workplace safety. The law requires the provision of a safe and healthy environment and student behaviour can sometimes be a threat to this.

## ***Parents/Guardians***

Lavalla Catholic College attempts to work with parents in identifying the best possible outcome for all parties. The College is aware that student misconduct can sometimes be distressing for parents and result in threatening or angry interactions from anxious parents. When such interaction becomes unproductive or where parents seek to exact retribution from the College for all manner of disciplinary action against their children or threaten legal action, the College may choose the option of seeking the services of an appropriate mediator. The attendance of qualified legal practitioners or agents acting for fee or reward is not permitted by the College.

## **SERIOUS OFFENCES**

The following offences are regarded as serious offences and when notified are the subject of a formal review process.

The offence may be committed while attending school or traveling directly to or from school, or engaged in any school activity away from the school, including travel organized by the school. A serious offence is committed when a student:

- behaves in such a way as to constitute a danger to the health of any staff member, student or any other person assisting in the conduct of school activities
- threatens or intimidates staff members in the course of their duty
- intimidates other students at school or threatens retribution after school
- commits an act of significant violence or causes significant damage or destruction to property, or is knowingly involved in the theft of property
- behaves in a manner which causes moral scandal to other students
- commits sexual, obscene or indecent acts
- fails to comply with any reasonable, formal and clearly communicated instruction of a principal or teacher or authorised staff member
- consistently behaves in a manner that interferes with the delivery of the curriculum and/or the educational opportunities of any other student or students
- behaves in a way that threatens the good order of the school's programme or facility
- engages in unacceptable discriminatory behaviour (including harassment) toward another person based on sex, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin), marital status, the status or condition of being a parent/guardian, the status or condition of being childless, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or physical or mental disability or impairment
- Engages in bullying or harassing behaviour. Bullying or harassing behaviour can take many forms and the effect of bullying actions on the person being bullied or harassed is given priority.

**Note: - Some serious offences are by their nature criminal offences and the College is obliged to observe certain legal requirements.**

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

### ***Student behaviour education and pastoral care – a whole-of-school responsibility***

Lavalla Catholic College's provision of positive behaviour education and behaviour management skilling of students is pastorally driven, comprehensive, and whole-of-school in nature.

The focus and intended outcome is personal resilience, the mode is prevention and primary intervention, and the application is to the school community as a whole and to each member of the school community individually. It is within such a positive and broad framework that Lavalla Catholic College school's student behaviour management processes for individual cases is formulated.

### ***Student connectedness and engagement***

An essential element of human wellbeing is the experience of belonging, of being connected to others in a community, being accepted and valued, and being positively involved and engaged within a community. Lavalla Catholic College behaviour management processes attempt to ensure that the student remains engaged and connected with school activities and the school community in preference to those that disengage the student.

### ***Restorative practices***

The philosophy of *Restorative Practices* informs a positive and formative approach to student behaviour management. A commitment to *Restorative Practices* has as its aim the promotion of resilience in the one harmed and the one causing harm.

Restorative measures help students learn from their mistakes, grow in self-discipline, take responsibility for their actions, recognise the impact of their actions on others, and reconcile and resolve conflict with others.

## **PROCEDURES**

### ***RESPONDING TO SERIOUS OFFENCES***

1. The formation of a Welfare and Well-being Conference Group

According to the nature of the offence and the judgement of the Principal, the **Welfare and Well-being Group** may involve some or all of the following people at various stages of the investigation and resolution of the situation

- a) Parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student
  - b) The Principal
  - c) The Campus Director
  - d) Welfare and Well-being Leader
  - e) The student
  - f) Any other person as deemed necessary by the College Principal
2. Role and responsibility of the Welfare and Well-being Conference Group
    - a) Ensures that a proper investigation of the offence and all relevant material has been undertaken
    - b) Convenes as soon as possible following the decision that a student has committed a serious offence
    - c) Considers all issues relevant to the behaviour of the student and the implication for others in the community
    - d) Identifies the educational and social needs of the student
    - e) Identifies strategies which will enable the student to re-establish his/her place in the life of the school/local community
    - f) Determines the appropriate steps required to meet these objectives
    - g) Considers the support and resources which may be available from both within the school and outside to assist in implementing the action
    - h) Ensures that accurate records of decisions are kept and that decisions are implemented
    - i) Maintains confidentiality at all times

### 3. Possible Outcomes of the Welfare and Well-being Conference Group

- a) Behaviour Management plan
- b) In School Withdrawal
- c) Out of School Suspension
- d) Negotiated Transfer
- e) Expulsion

In its final deliberation, the group is to aim for consensus. Where this is not achievable, the principal takes responsibility for a final decision.

#### **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PLAN**

This is an agreement that is reached between Lavalla Catholic College, the student and the parent(s)/guardian regarding the student's continuing enrolment in the school.

The following matters need to be considered and written into the contract:

1. Expectations regarding the student's future behaviour
2. Class and timetable arrangements, including any specific scheduling of lessons
3. Duration of the plan
4. Means by which the student will be monitored and managed during the arrangement
5. Arrangements to apply following a satisfactory conclusion of the plan
6. Arrangement to apply if the student's behaviour is not in accordance with the planned stated expectations.

It is recommended that the Behaviour Management Plan be recorded in writing, signed by the parties involved and dated.

#### **1. IN-SCHOOL WITHDRAWAL**

Withdrawal from class and/or other school activities, if judged necessary as a behaviour management process, is best done in-school rather than out-of-school, as this maintains a student's connectedness and engagement with the school. It is recommended that school processes for the withdrawal of the student from some aspect(s) of the school program are structured positively to assist in the student's return to acceptable behaviours. An example is the provision of time, in an appropriate and supervised setting, for the student to reflect upon their behaviours and attitudes, the impact of these on themselves and others, reasons for preferring acceptable behaviours, and ways to find encouragement and assistance to achieve this goal. An allocated task in keeping with such a purpose is recommended.

#### **2. OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

If out-of-school suspension is judged appropriate by the school, it is recommended that it be for the shortest time necessary. At least one day prior to the day on which the suspension is to commence, the College should notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), if possible by verbal communication initially and by confirmation in writing

The communication ought to include the reason for the suspension, the purpose of the suspension, and the date(s) on which the suspension will occur.

It is also recommended that the parent(s)/guardian(s) be offered the opportunity to participate in a meeting to consider these and other related matters, including:

- the legal and pastoral responsibilities of the parent(s)/guardian(s) during the time of suspension
- the school's responsibility for providing learning material during the time of suspension
- the process of settling back into the school environment, and how this is to be facilitated
- arrangements for monitoring the student's progress following his/her return to school.

If an initial verbal contact with the parent(s)/guardian(s) is not possible, it may be necessary to ask the student to take the written notice home to them as their first notification. This decision rests with the school authority, taking into account the age of the student, legal requirements, duty of care, and other relevant circumstances.

### **NEGOTIATED TRANSFER**

This is an action which involves a change of school by a student either between Catholic schools or to another school in the area or alternative educational setting.

After appropriate processes, a school authority can decide that a student should be transferred for his/her own good. In this context, the Principal ensures that disciplinary measures and sanctions are approached not as merely punitive actions but as concerted attempts to foster responsibility for actions, and to both change and heal destructive behaviours and breaches of order.

**If a negotiated transfer is considered to be the most appropriate action, the following matters need to be considered: -**

- a) The environment that would best provide for the student's emotional, social and spiritual needs, commensurate with his/her age
- b) The College which would provide an educational program suitable to the student's interests, ability and aspirations
- c) The process by which the transfer will be negotiated
- d) The support required by the student and the parent(s)/guardian in making the transition
- e) In the case of students of post-compulsory school age a wider range of options may be considered (e.g. transfer either temporary or permanent to the work force, or to a higher education or training institute.)

### **3. EXPULSION**

#### **General Information**

The principal has the authority to permanently exclude a student from the school according to the procedures set out. This power cannot be delegated to any other person at the school level.

Permanent expulsion from a school is the most extreme sanction open to a principal. Except in the most unusual and extreme circumstances, it will only be used after other relevant forms of behaviour management outlined in the College Procedures have been exhausted.

#### **Grounds for expulsion**

The principal can expel a student from the College if, while attending school or directly traveling to or from school or engaged in any school activity away from the school, including travel organized by the school;

- the student does anything mentioned above under "Serious Offences" or possesses, uses or deliberately assists others to use illegal drugs or prohibited substances
- the student's behaviour is of such magnitude that having regard to the need of the student to receive an education compared to the welfare and safety of other students at the school and the need to maintain order and discipline within the school, a suspension under the 'Grounds for Suspension' is inadequate to deal with that behaviour.

In determining to expel a student, the principal must also take into account the age of the student and any special needs of a student who has a disability or impairment.

#### **4. ACCOUNTABILITY**

Prior to executing an expulsion order, the principal may present the following to the Catholic Education Office to seek their advice, endorsement or ratification.

- the nature of the offence
- past history of the student
- victim impact if applicable
- procedure followed
- confirmation of offer for voluntary withdrawal
- correspondence.

**The principal will consider the response of the Catholic Education Office, but has the authority to make the final decision.**